



**United Nations
Inter-Agency Group
on Ageing**

Joint Advocacy Brief

Advancing the inclusion of population ageing, older persons and their human rights: Considerations towards the Second World Summit for Social Development outcome

10 February 2025

Executive Summary

This joint advocacy brief, prepared by the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, underscores the importance of addressing population ageing, older persons, and their human rights, recognizing their vital implications for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The forthcoming political declaration, as an outcome of the Second World Summit for Social Development and to be adopted through intergovernmental negotiations in New York, is intended to be a concise, action-oriented document that reaffirms a social development approach while contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In support of Member States in this endeavor, the brief offers targeted technical guidance while also reflecting key discussions from the first informal hearing for stakeholders, which emphasized the need to include older persons and recognize the realities of an ageing world. The technical guidance provided is not intended to be exhaustive nor to suggest any prioritization of issues, but rather reflects the key topics highlighted by Member States during the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, viewed through the ageing perspective.

This joint advocacy brief is submitted by the Co-Chairs of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, DESA programme on ageing and ESCWA, with special thanks to WHO for their contributions as Co-Chair in 2024. For more information, please visit: <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/ageing/iaga> or contact us at ageing@un.org



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BACKGROUND

Since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and the subsequent adoption of its Political Declaration and Programme of Action (PoA), the world has seen transformative changes. While global frameworks like the Millennium Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals have addressed many emerging challenges and opportunities, they often fell short in tackling a major trend shaping our world: population ageing. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Political Declaration adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 marked a pivotal moment, bringing population ageing, older persons and their human rights to the forefront of international efforts and coordination. Complementary initiatives, such as the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030), have further deepened our understanding of the societal impacts of ageing, particularly for older persons, and the need for collective action. As Member States convene for the Second World Summit for Social Development, integrating population ageing into political commitments is critical. Doing so will close gaps in addressing age-related challenges, leverage the opportunities of population ageing and extend healthy longevity and advance equitable social development in an ageing world.

PURPOSE

This advocacy brief, developed by the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, is a UN system's contribution to the preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development. It aims to support intergovernmental discussions by compiling agreed language from key resolutions negotiated across various bodies, including the General Assembly, ECOSOC and its Commissions, the Human Rights Council, the World Health Assembly, the International Labour Conference, and the World Telecommunication Development Conference.

The joint advocacy brief is structured around the substantive chapters and priority areas of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and its PoA. Each section of the brief:

1. Introduces the ageing perspective of the relevant PoA chapter.
2. Highlights possible entry points to apply an age lens in the priorities identified in the PoA
3. Includes a compendium of agreed language relevant to each possible entry point.

The final section of the joint advocacy brief addresses gaps and emerging issues that social development agendas should address in an ageing world. The agreed language provided is not intended to be exhaustive nor to imply any prioritization of issues, but instead reflects the key topics highlighted by Member States during the 1995 Summit from an ageing perspective. Table 1 outlines these key topics

Table 1: Key Topics from the 1995 World Summit for Social Development Viewed Through the Ageing Perspective

An enabling environment for social development

- Ensure that persons are at the center of development
- Reaffirm and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Gender equality and equity
- Integration of population issues
- Implementing effective policies and development strategies
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination
- Respond properly to local needs

Eradication of poverty

- Poverty in old age and the gender dimension
- Social protection
- Health and long-term care services
- Housing
- Intergenerational relations
- Access to justice

Expansion of productive employment and reduction of unemployment

- Employment and lifelong learning
- Access and use of technologies
- Care and support services, including caregivers

Social integration

- Social integration of older persons
- Full participation in society
- Political participation and greater involvement of civil society
- Promotion of non-discrimination
- Neglect, abuse and violence
- Emergencies and human mobility

CHAPTER 1: AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Since the first World Summit for Social Development, the demographic landscape of the world has undergone and will continue to experience significant transformations. According to the 2024 revision of the World Population Prospects, produced by the DESA Population Division, the global population aged 60 years or over has increased from around 541 million in 1995 to 1.2 billion in 2025, and it is projected to reach 2.1 billion by 2050. The most rapid increase in the older population is expected to occur in developing countries, which will account for the majority of older persons within the next 30 years. Following the decline in life expectancy caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, global life expectancy is rising once again. In 2025, life expectancy at birth has reached 73.5 years, an increase of 8.6 years since the 1995 Summit. Further reductions in mortality are expected to result in an average global life expectancy of around 77.4 years in 2050. Notably, the number of persons aged 80 years or over is growing at a faster rate than the number of persons aged 60 or over, and by the mid-2030s, this age group is projected to outnumber infants (aged 1 year or less), reaching 265 million.

In its first chapter, the Copenhagen PoA recognized the importance of integrating population issues in economic and development strategies, achieving equitable and non-discriminatory distribution of the benefits of growth among social groups and countries and combating discrimination. Considering the far-reaching implications that population ageing trends will have on the social, economic and environment dimensions of development, achieving sustainable social development in an ageing world requires policy choices that incorporate the age perspective. This approach would allow countries to harness all the potential and opportunities that population ageing and longevity offer to individuals, families and societies and be better prepared to surmount its challenges.

Opportunities for action

Ensure that Persons are at the Center of Development

Placing people at the center of development has long been a guiding principle of international efforts. In the context of a rapidly ageing world, this principle takes on renewed importance. Older persons are not only beneficiaries of development but also vital contributors to its success. They are agents of development, driving intergenerational solidarity, societal resilience, and the well-being of society as a whole.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- The potential of older persons is a powerful basis for future development. This enables society to rely increasingly on the skills, experience and wisdom of older persons, not only to take the lead in their own betterment but also to participate actively in that of society as a whole. **(Article 10, Political Declaration, Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Encourages Member States to intensify efforts towards identifying ageing as an opportunity, and recognizes that older persons make substantial contributions to sustainable development efforts, including through their active participation in society. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Recognizing also the essential contribution that older persons can continue to make to the functioning of societies and towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognizing further the importance

of ensuring equal opportunity for older persons to fully and effectively enjoy their human rights and fully develop their human potential. **(A/RES/75/131 – United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030))**

- Calls upon Member States to fully utilize the potential of older persons, recognizing intergenerational partnerships and solidarity and the essential contribution that older persons continue to make to the functioning of societies and towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development if adequate guarantees are in place, and encourages Member States to create an enabling environment for the equal, full, effective and meaningful participation of older persons in political, social, economic and cultural life, while taking into account the diversity of situation of older persons and responding to population ageing as well as to multiple forms of discrimination resulting from ageism and other inequalities throughout the life course. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**

Opportunities for action

Reaffirm and Promote All Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

While ageing in itself does not necessarily make individuals more vulnerable, a number of physical, political, economic and social factors that accompany older age can contribute to create challenges for older persons in the enjoyment of their human rights. Strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons is essential for creating an inclusive society where they can fully exercise their rights, free from discrimination, and on the basis of equality.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Recognizes the challenges related to the enjoyment of all human rights that older persons face in different areas and that those challenges require in-depth analysis and action to address protection gaps, and calls upon all States to promote and ensure the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for older persons, including by progressively taking measures to combat age discrimination, neglect, abuse and violence, as well as social isolation and loneliness, to provide social protection, access to food and housing, healthcare services, employment, information and communications technologies, including new technologies, assistive technologies, legal capacity and access to justice and to address issues related to social integration and gender inequality through mainstreaming the rights of older persons into sustainable development strategies, urban policies and poverty reduction strategies, bearing in mind the crucial importance of intergenerational solidarity for social development. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, A/RES/75/131 – United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030))**
- Recognizing that older persons face a number of particular barriers to their enjoyment of human rights, including lack of access to quality health support, long-term care and support and palliative care, accessibility and unpaid care work, and emphasizing the importance of promoting inclusive, age-sensitive communities and environments and of providing a range of support services that promote the dignity, autonomy and independence of older persons to enable them to remain in their homes as they age, respecting their individual preferences. **(A/HRC/RES/54/6 - Centrality of Care and Support from a Human Rights Perspective)**

Addressing the gendered experiences of ageing is essential to ensure equity in resources and opportunities for older persons, while eliminating life-course discrimination. This requires integrating gender perspectives into policies and programmes to promote equality and challenge stereotypes, particularly those affecting older women.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- (...) We recognize the need to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies and programmes to take account of the needs and experiences of older women and men. **(Article 8, Political Declaration, Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Also calls upon Member States to strengthen and incorporate a gender and disability perspective into all policy actions on ageing, as well as to address and eliminate discrimination on the basis of age, sex or disability, and recommends that Member States engage with all sectors of society, in particular with relevant organizations with an interest in the matter, including organizations of older persons, women and persons with disabilities, in changing negative stereotypes about older persons, in particular older women and older persons with disabilities, and promote positive narratives of all older persons. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**

Forward thinking calls for embracing the potential of the ageing population as a basis for future development. Global population ageing is one of the most significant demographic shifts of the twenty-first century, affecting virtually all countries. This transformation is reshaping the age structure of societies, necessitating reforms in social protection systems, healthcare services and economic policies. To effectively navigate these changes, evidence-based planning and foresight are essential, enabling the development of policies that address the diverse needs of older persons and ensure equitable access to services.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Encourages Member States to create an enabling environment for the equal, full, effective and meaningful participation of older persons in political, social, economic and cultural life, while taking into account the diversity of situation of

older persons and responding to population ageing as well as to multiple forms of discrimination resulting from ageism and other inequality throughout the life course. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**

- Strengthen cooperation among States in their response to demographic trends and realities, such as rapid population growth, declining birth rates and ageing populations, as well as in addressing the interlinkages between population issues and development across all regions, taking into account the needs and interests of present and future generations, including children and youth, and the substantial contributions of older persons to sustainable development efforts. **(A/RES/79/1 - The Pact for the Future, Annex II: Declaration on Future Generations)**
- Recognizing population ageing as one of the major trends that are likely to shape the prospects for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all of the Sustainable Development Goals, and recognizing also that implementing the priority directions and recommendations for action of the Madrid Plan of Action and the relevant regional implementation strategies are now more vital than ever to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to efforts to leave no one behind, particularly older persons. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**
- Encourages Member States to promote the understanding of ageing as an issue of concern to society as a whole, through lifelong education at all levels, in order to combat ageism and discrimination against older persons, taking into account the gender dimension, and to link ageing to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**

Opportunities for action

Implementing Effective Policies and Development Strategies

Mainstreaming ageing and the concerns of older persons into national development frameworks is crucial for effective policy implementation. This requires integrating ageing into broader development strategies, including poverty eradication and sustainable development. Success depends on collaboration across Governments, civil society, and the private sector, within an environment that promotes democracy, human rights, and good governance.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- (...) Policies on ageing deserve close examination from the developmental perspective of a broader life course and a society-wide view, taking into account recent global initiatives and the guiding principles set down by major United Nations conferences and summits. **(Excerpt para 9 - Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing)**
- Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the broad recommendations of the International Plan of Action, 2002. A necessary first step in the successful implementation of the Plan is to mainstream ageing and the concerns of older persons into national development frameworks and poverty eradication strategies. Programme innovation, mobilization of financial resources and the development of necessary human resources will be undertaken simultaneously. Accordingly, progress in the implementation of the Plan should be contingent upon effective partnership between Governments, all parts of civil society and the private sector as well as an enabling environment based, inter alia, on democracy, the rule of law, respect for all human rights, fundamental freedoms and good

governance at all levels, including national and international levels. **(Para 116 - Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing)**

- Also encourages Member States to accelerate their efforts to mainstream the linkages between population ageing and sustainable development into national policies and programmes across all levels of government, where appropriate, and to link ageing to frameworks for social and economic development and human rights. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**

Opportunities for action

Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination

Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards others or oneself based on age. Ageism against older persons is widespread across institutions, including those providing health and social care and support, and in workplaces, the media and others. Ageist practices often homogenize older persons, ignoring their diverse needs and preferences, and intersect with other forms of discrimination based on gender, disability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other factors.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Recognizing also that ageism is a widely prevalent and prejudicial attitude that may rest on the assumption that neglect of, and discrimination against, older persons is acceptable, and that ageism is the common source of, the justification for and the driving force behind age discrimination. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Emphasizes the need to take effective measures against ageism and to view older persons as active contributors to society and not as passive receivers of care and assistance and an impending burden on welfare systems and economies, while promoting and protecting their human rights **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Calls upon all stakeholders, including States, the entities of the United Nations system, civil society, national human rights institutions and the private sector to combat ageism as a root cause of violence, abuse and neglect, as well as to eliminate violence, abuse and neglect in all their forms and to adopt a human rights-based approach in all programmes, campaigns and activities relating to ageing and older persons. **(A/HRC/RES/54/13 - Human rights of Older Persons)**

Opportunities for action

Respond Properly to Local Needs

The physical and social environments in our cities and communities are powerful influences on the experience of ageing and the opportunities that ageing affords. Age-friendly environments foster healthy and active ageing. They enable older people to age safely in a place that is right for them; be free from poverty; continue to develop personally; and to contribute to their communities while retaining autonomy, health and dignity.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Calls upon Member States to promote, in accordance with their national priorities, equitable and affordable access to sustainable basic physical and social infrastructure for all, without discrimination, including affordable serviced land, housing, modern and renewable energy, safe drinking water and sanitation, safe, nutritious and adequate food, waste disposal, sustainable mobility, healthcare services and family planning, education, culture and information and communications technologies, and to ensure that these services are responsive to the rights and needs of older persons, while recognizing that planning for and providing opportunities for making cities inclusive of older persons' economic and social participation is an important dimension of the construction of sustainable cities. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**

CHAPTER 2: ERADICATING POVERTY

The prevention and reduction of poverty are prerequisites for the well-being and full participation of older persons in their communities. Rates of poverty among this age group vary significantly among and within regions and often reflect systemic and structural gaps that affect the entire population. Current trends point to an increase in economic inequality among future cohorts of older persons compared with the current cohort, with women in older age facing particular vulnerabilities. Future social policies geared towards combatting poverty must therefore highlight and integrate the effect of inequalities accumulated throughout the life course.

The Copenhagen PoA emphasized the need to protect older persons, including those with disabilities. It also acknowledged the impact of old age in other Plan actions, namely in the context of urban poverty and under social protection. Yet, it lacked sufficient analysis on the impact of ageing trends on the access of present and future older persons to resources in areas key in poverty eradication efforts, such as health and long-term care and support. Further, it did not emphasize the need for age-disaggregated data and age-specific approaches that are needed to effectively address poverty among older persons, who face unique economic challenges, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Opportunities for action

Poverty in Old Age

Older persons, especially for those who have faced poverty throughout their lives, are more vulnerable to experience economic insecurity. Promoting economic security in old age demands integrating ageing issues into poverty eradication and development plans, with a particular focus on improving social protection, labour market access, and combatting discrimination, while promoting health and well.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Deeply concerned that the situation of older persons in many parts of the world has been negatively affected by the world financial and economic crisis, and noting with concern the high incidence of poverty among them, particularly older single women. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Recognizes that the risk of poverty increases with old age in several ways, and that the pandemic has had a negative impact on the financial security of older persons, including older widows, and in this regard calls upon Member States to enable people to reach old age in better economic conditions by, inter alia, addressing barriers in labour markets and inadequate social protection systems and combating elder abuse and neglect as well as the adverse impact of all forms of discrimination and inequalities experienced by older persons, especially older women. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Encourages Member States to take into account the multidimensional nature of the vulnerability of older persons to poverty and economic insecurity, including through the promotion of good health, care and well-being, in their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Encourages Governments to pay greater attention to building capacity to eradicate poverty among older persons, in particular older women and older persons with disabilities, by mainstreaming ageing issues into poverty eradication measures, women's empowerment strategies and national development plans, and to include both ageing-specific policies and ageing-mainstreaming efforts in their national strategies. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Expresses concern that the growing share of older persons in the population presents a significant additional risk of vulnerability to economic insecurity and poverty and that people living in areas where poverty is endemic, and having endured a life of poverty and deprivation, are often at greater risk of slipping deeper into poverty in their older age. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**

Opportunities for action

Poverty in Old Age: The Gender Dimension

Poverty in old age disproportionately affects older women, especially those in rural or marginalized areas, as a result of discrimination experienced throughout the life course. Policies must include a gender perspective, ensuring equal access to social services, economic resources, and social protection. Combating age and gender-based discrimination, violence, and isolation, while improving access to healthcare, financial services, and legal protections, is key to empowering older women and reducing their vulnerability to poverty.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Ensuring that the rights of older women in rural areas are taken into account with regard to their equal access to basic social services, appropriate social protection and/or social security measures, equal access to and control of economic resources and their empowerment through access to financial and infrastructure services, with special focus on the provision of support to older women, including Indigenous women, who often have access to few resources and are often more vulnerable. **(A/RES/78/181 - Improvement of the Situation of Women and Girls in Rural Areas)**

- Recognizing further the need to incorporate a gender perspective in all policies and programmes concerning older persons in order to take into account the specific needs and experiences of older women and men. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**
- The Commission recognizes older women's positive contribution to the economy and society, including through the provision of care and domestic work and support. It also recognizes the challenges to the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for older women, including by progressively taking measures to combat age discrimination, neglect, abuse and all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, as well as social isolation and loneliness; providing social protection, access to food, water and housing, health-care services, employment, information and communications technologies, including new technologies and assistive technologies, legal services and justice; and addressing issues related to social integration and gender inequality through mainstreaming the rights of older persons into sustainable and people-centred development strategies, urban policies and poverty reduction strategies, bearing in mind the crucial importance of intergenerational solidarity for social development. **(E/CN.6/2024/L.3 – CSW68 Agreed Conclusions 2024 - Accelerating the Achievement of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls by Addressing Poverty and Strengthening Institutions and Financing with a Gender Perspective)**
- Identify and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters, in relation to land tenure security and access to, ownership of and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance, and ensure women's and girls' access to justice and accountability for violations of their human rights, with particular attention given to older women, widows and young women. **(E/CN.6/2022/L.7 – CSW66 Agreed Conclusions 2022 – Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in the Context of Climate Change, Environmental and Disaster Risk Reduction Policies and Programmes)**
- Recognizing that women living in poverty face a higher likelihood of career disruptions, part-time employment, occupational segregation, lower earnings, concentration in the informal sector and unequal distribution of unpaid care and support and domestic work, with less protection in terms of labour rights, safe working conditions and social benefits, such as a pension, health insurance or paid sick leave, resulting in older women having fewer assets, savings and social protection benefits. **(A/HRC/RES/56/22 - Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Girls)**

Opportunities for action

Social Protection

Social protection is vital for ensuring the economic security and well-being of older persons. Grounded in international human rights law, the right to social security is explicitly referenced in several treaties, which emphasize the importance of protecting older persons through social security schemes. Both contributory and non-contributory systems are crucial for providing financial stability and enabling older persons to live with dignity.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Encourages Member States to consider expanding, in accordance with domestic legislation and policies, the reach of sustainable pension schemes, including but not limited to strategies such as social pensions, and increasing their

benefits, with a view to ensuring income security in old age. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**

- Encourages Member States to formulate and implement sustainable, inclusive and equitable pension policies and seek to improve the effectiveness of their social protection and security systems, taking into consideration that it is necessary to promote decent work, which will subsequently allow for decent retirement, as well as to prevent old-age poverty, including by recognizing unpaid care work over the life course in pension policies. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**
- Promote legal, administrative and policy measures that strengthen social protection schemes, including unemployment protection schemes and ensure women's full and equal access to pension systems, including access to income security for older women, through contributory and/or non-contributory schemes that are independent of their employment trajectories, and reduce gender gaps in coverage and benefit levels in order to contribute to the eradication of poverty. **(E/CN.6/2024/L.3 – CSW68 Agreed Conclusions 2024 - Accelerating the Achievement of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls by Addressing Poverty and Strengthening Institutions and Financing with a Gender Perspective)**
- Access to universal social protection is also crucial for the prevention and reduction of poverty, inequalities, social exclusion and insecurity; and as a means to maintain workers' income and living standards. It is also an effective crisis response, enabling access to healthcare and stabilizing aggregate demand by supporting income security and facilitating job transitions and business stability. Moreover, social protection represents an investment in inclusive and well-functioning economies and contributes to decent work, productive employment, sustainable enterprises and inclusive growth, ensuring improved tax revenues and fostering social cohesion. **(ILC.109/Resolution III, International Labour Conference)**

Opportunities for action

Health and Long-Term Care Services

For older persons, access to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is vital to ensuring autonomy, resilience, and well-being. While ageing is often viewed through a biomedical lens, older persons represent a diverse group with varied capacities and needs. This underscores the importance of accessible, integrated, and person-centered, rights-based health and long-term care and support systems.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Concerned that many health systems are not sufficiently prepared to respond to the needs of the rapidly ageing population, including the need for preventive, curative, palliative and specialized care. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Urges Member States to develop, implement and evaluate policies and programmes that promote healthy and active ageing and the highest attainable standard of health and well-being for older persons and to develop health care for older persons as part of primary care in the existing health systems. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**

- Encourages Member States to establish or to strengthen strategic approaches and policy options in relation to the physical and mental health of older persons in the light of new and emerging disease patterns, notably non-communicable diseases, as well as in relation to increased life expectancy, with particular attention to promoting good health and addressing health needs across a care continuum, including prevention, detection and diagnosis, management and rehabilitation, treatment and palliative care, with the aim of achieving comprehensive health-care coverage for older persons. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Also encourages Member States to develop and implement long-term care strategies, as well as to conduct research on good practices of care strategies, recognizing and supporting both paid and unpaid care work for the benefit of older persons, and to further promote long-term care as a positive social and economic investment and a source of employment expansion. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Scale up efforts to develop, implement and evaluate policies and programmes that promote healthy and active ageing, maintain and improve quality of life of older persons and to identify and respond to the growing needs of the rapidly ageing population, especially the need for continuum of care, including promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care as well as specialized care and the sustainable provision of long-term care, including home and community care services, and access to assistive technologies, taking note of the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030), reaffirming the importance of extending universal health coverage to all older persons. **(A/RES/78/4 - Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage)**
- Recognize the increasing gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy for older persons and note that despite the progress achieved at the global level, many health systems continue to be inadequately prepared to identify and respond to the growing needs of the rapidly ageing population, including the increased prevalence of non-communicable diseases. **(A/RES/78/4 - Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage)**
- Encourages Member States to address the well-being and adequate health care of older persons, including affordable, accessible, quality and integrated long-term care and support services as well as palliative care, including through expanding educational opportunities for all health professionals working with older persons, and recognizes that the incidence and impacts of non-communicable diseases and disability in older age can be largely prevented or reduced with an approach that incorporates evidence-based, affordable, cost-effective, population-wide and multisectoral interventions over the life course. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**
- Urges States to consider investment in care and support and promote legal systems or frameworks in care and support policies and infrastructure, and promote national legislation and capacity-building to ensure universal access to affordable and quality services for all, including childcare, in the health and support sector for persons with disabilities and older persons, which is necessary to address care needs for persons throughout their life course, and to ensure universal access to paid maternity, paternity and parental leave and social protection for all workers, including for both informal workers and those in non-standard forms of employment. **(E/RES/2024/4 - ECOSOC - Promoting Care and Support Systems for Social Development)**
- Recognizing also that support is an integral part of being able to live independently and being included in the community, and recognizing further the importance of increasing the resilience of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons living with mental health conditions by ensuring legal and social protection, adopting employment measures, providing better care and support services and promoting long-term care and support at home and in the community, facilitating access to and sharing of accessible and assistive technologies, especially new and emerging ones, including information and communications systems, mobility aids, assistive devices and other assistive technologies with a view to guaranteeing their empowerment, autonomy and independence. **(E/RES/2024/4 - ECOSOC - Promoting Care and Support Systems for Social Development)**

- Emphasizes the need to foster healthy ageing worldwide, in particular to change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing, ensure that communities foster the abilities of older persons, promote health by implementing policy measures, including raising awareness about healthy lifestyles and health literacy and promoting occupational safety and health over the life course, deliver integrated care and primary health services responsive to older persons, and provide access to long-term care for older persons who need it. **(E/CN.9/2022/L.6 - CPD Resolution - Population and Sustainable Development, in Particular Sustained and Inclusive Economic Growth)**
- We reaffirm our commitment to a balanced, integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary and scientific evidence-based approach to the world drug problem, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, and recognize the importance of appropriately mainstreaming a gender and age perspective into drug-related policies and programmes and that appropriate emphasis should be placed on individuals, families, communities and society as a whole, with a particular focus on women, children and youth, with a view to promoting and protecting health, including access to treatment, safety and the well-being of all humanity. **(CND, 2019 Ministerial Declaration, "Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem")**
- Affirming that access to internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for palliative care and emergency medical care, contributes to the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for all, in particular older persons. **(A/HRC/RES/52/24 - Contribution of the Human Rights Council with Regard to the Human Rights Implications of Drug Policy)**
- Recognizing the intersection between older age and disability and the specific challenges linked to accessibility for older persons with disabilities, especially those faced by older women with disabilities. **(A/RES/78/195 - Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol Thereto: Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies)**
- Noting that populations around the world, at all income levels, are rapidly ageing; yet, that the extent of the opportunities that arise from older populations, their increasing longevity and active ageing will be heavily dependent on good health; (...) Noting also that healthy ageing is significantly influenced by social determinants of health, with people from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups experiencing markedly poorer health in older age and shorter life expectancy. **(WHA69/2016/REC/1 Resolution 69.3 - World Health Assembly)**
- Urges Member States to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies, programmes and multisectoral action on noncommunicable disease prevention and health promotion in order to strengthen healthy ageing policies and programmes and promote the highest standard of health and wellbeing for older persons. **(WHA65/2012/REC/1 Resolution 65.3 - World Health Assembly)**

Opportunities for action

Housing

Enabling and supportive housing and living environments are essential for the well-being, autonomy, and dignity of older persons. Accessible, age-friendly housing and communities promote independent living, social inclusion, and safety, while addressing the diverse needs of older persons, including those with disabilities. Governments and stakeholders must prioritize policies and investments that ensure affordable, adaptable, and inclusive living environments, fostering healthy ageing.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Promotion of "ageing in place" in the community with due regard to individual preferences and affordable housing options for older persons. **(Para 98 - Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing)**
- Improvement in housing and environmental design to promote independent living by taking into account the needs of older persons in particular those with disabilities. **(Para 99 - Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing)**
- Improved availability of accessible and affordable transportation for older persons. **(Para 100 - Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing)**
- Encourages national and local governments to improve access to affordable housing, particularly for older persons, through integrated housing policies and social protection measures, and to provide a range of support services that promote their dignity, autonomy and independence, including by addressing legal and policy barriers to equal and non-discriminatory access to adequate housing for them. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**

Opportunities for action

Intergenerational Relations

Solidarity between generations in families, communities and nations is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages. From the perspective of generational economies, older persons contribute to the economy through both formal and informal work, engage in consumption, share their financial wealth and assets by way of intergenerational transfers, save and contribute to public budgets by paying taxes. In a future where, for the first time, up to six generations will coexist, there is a need for adequate policy choices that apply an intergenerational approach to harness all the potential and opportunities that population ageing and longevity offer to individuals, families and societies.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- We decide to (...) Strengthen intergenerational partnerships and solidarity among generations by promoting opportunities for voluntary, constructive and regular interaction between young and older persons in their families, workplaces and in society at large. **(A/RES/79/1 - The Pact for the Future)**
- Recognizes the importance of strengthening intergenerational partnerships and solidarity, and in this regard calls upon Member States to promote opportunities for voluntary, constructive and regular interaction between young people and older generations in the family, the workplace and society at large. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Reaffirms that intergenerational solidarity is a fundamental component for the achievement of an inclusive and just society for all ages, including youth and older persons, that solidarity is also a major prerequisite for social cohesion and a foundation of formal and informal welfare and care systems and that changing demographic, social and

economic circumstances may require the adjustment of pension, social security, health and long-term care systems, including to ensure that they are gender-responsive and age-sensitive, and in this respect encourages Member States to adopt effective means to reduce poverty and the intergenerational transfer of poverty through social protection measures, such as old-age pensions, cash transfers, housing assistance, child benefits and tax breaks **(E/CN.9/2022/L.6 - CPD Resolution - Population and Sustainable Development, in Particular Sustained and Inclusive Economic Growth)**

- Acknowledging that strengthening intergenerational relations, through such measures as promoting intergenerational living arrangements and encouraging extended family members to live in close proximity to each other, has been found to promote the autonomy, security and well-being of children and older persons and that initiatives to promote involved and positive parenting and to support the role of grandparents have been found to be beneficial in advancing social integration and solidarity between generations, as well as in promoting and protecting the human rights of all family members. **(A/RES/79/150 - Observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2024)**

Opportunities for action

Access to Justice

Access to justice is crucial for social development. Older persons encounter distinct challenges in accessing justice, such as physical barriers, the need for reasonable accommodations, affordability, judicial delays, and the impact of digitization. Ageism further intensifies these obstacles. An equitable legal framework that protects the human rights of older persons and eliminates age-based discrimination is essential for fostering dignity and inclusion.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Calls upon all States to establish and/or enhance effective redress mechanisms and to ensure access to justice for, on an equal basis with others, all older persons who become victims and survivors of violence, abuse and neglect and for older persons subjected to discrimination based on age, gender, race or disability or on other grounds, including legal aid and support, as well as accessible and age-responsive legal proceedings. **(A/HRC/RES/54/13 - Human Rights of Older Persons)**
- Emphasizes the right of equal access to justice for all, including people in vulnerable situations, and the importance of awareness-raising concerning legal rights, and in this regard commits to taking all necessary steps to provide fair, transparent, effective, non-discriminatory and accountable services that promote access to justice for all, including legal aid. **(A/RES/78/227- Equal Access to Justice for All)**

CHAPTER 3: EXPANSION OF PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT

In the field of employment, acknowledging diversity in old age entails enabling older persons who can and wish to work to continue doing so, while also putting in place systems to support those who are unable or choose not to work. In such systems, older persons can navigate future transitions with freedom from fear and insecurity. The Copenhagen PoA identified older workers as a group that is particularly subjected to long-term unemployment and acknowledged

that the lack of adequate care and support services for older persons, can act as barriers to the integration and reintegration of women, in the formal labour force.

A renewed commitment to expanding productive employment and reducing unemployment should incorporate forward looking policies and programmes that consider and integrate current and future population dynamics. Such policies should range from increasing labour force participation among groups that have traditionally been excluded from it, addressing age discrimination at work and other barriers in access to decent work, promoting life-long learning, offering flexible and part-time work arrangements, as well as harnessing the potential of new digital technologies.

Opportunities for action

Employment and Life-Long Learning

Ensuring that older persons have equal access to employment opportunities and lifelong learning is essential for their continued social and economic participation. Inclusive policies can and should play a role in shaping the future of work with a life course approach. By creating accessible, safe, and healthy work environments, societies can empower older persons to remain active in the workforce for as long as they wish and are able. Lifelong learning and skill development help older persons adapt to evolving job markets and enhance their well-being.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Also encourages Member States to promote and facilitate the participation of older persons in the labour market as long as they want to work and are able to do so, and improve active and inclusive labour market policies and social protection systems that respond to an ageing workforce, to promote intergenerational dialogue in the workplace, to enhance skills development and family-friendly working arrangements, and to provide healthy, safe and accessible workplaces. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**
- Stresses the fundamental importance of equal opportunities, education, and technical and vocational training, including the use of new and emerging digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence, and that lifelong learning opportunities and guidance for all, including for women, young people, older persons and persons with disabilities, are necessary for the realization of the right to work. **(A/HRC/RES/55/9 - Right to Work)**
- Employers' and workers' organizations should: (...) contribute as key partners to training and reskilling activities, and cultivate a culture of lifelong learning for workers of all ages. **(ILC.111/Resolution V - International Labour Conference)**

Opportunities for action

Access and Use of Technologies: The Digital Divides

Closing existing digital divides is a precondition for older persons' full participation in the digital world. This requires universal access to technology, promoting digital literacy, and addressing barriers like gender, disability, and ageism. By fostering inclusive digital skills and leveraging emerging technologies, societies can enhance older persons' well-being and ensure their inclusion.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Stresses the need to close all digital divides, including, inter alia, both between and within countries, the rural-urban digital divide, the gender digital divide, and between youth and older persons, which can be experienced by older persons by providing universal and affordable access to and use of information and communications technologies, including new technologies and the meaningful use of digitally enabled services, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to people throughout their life course without discrimination based on age or other forms of discrimination, and welcomes efforts by the United Nations to assist Member States, upon their request, in achieving this. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Encourages Member States to promote digital literacy with a special focus on enhancing digital skills and competencies of older persons without discrimination of any kind, including socioeconomic status, education level, race and/or ethnicity, gender and disability as well as language barriers, by taking into account national and regional contexts. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Stressing also the need to close digital divides, both between and within countries, including the rural-urban, youth-older persons and gender digital divides, and to harness digital technologies for sustainable development and the promotion and protection of human rights, and recalling the need to emphasize quality of access to bridge digital and knowledge divides, using a multidimensional approach that includes speed, stability, affordability, safety, language, training, capacity-building, local content and accessibility, including for older persons and persons with disabilities. **(A/RES/78/213 - Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Digital Technologies)**
- Further encourages Member States to promote digital literacy with a special focus on enhancing the digital skills and competencies of older persons, including through digital training and assistance, without discrimination of any kind, including socioeconomic status, education level, race and/or ethnicity, gender and disability as well as language barriers, by taking into account national and regional contexts, in order to promote the digital inclusion of older persons. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**
- Also encourages Member States to harness scientific research and expertise and realize the potential of information and communications technologies, including new technologies, assistive technologies, as well as rapid technological change, to focus on, inter alia, the individual, social, educational and health implications of ageing, in particular in developing countries, and to provide universal and affordable access to and use of these technologies to close all digital divides that can be experienced by older persons, including between and within countries, the rural-urban digital divide, the gender digital divide, and between youth and older persons. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**
- The Commission further recognizes that the digital divides have a particular impact on older women, as they often experience less exposure and in some cases even no exposure to new technologies and skills, including due to time spent out of the paid labour force, inter alia, in order to carry out unpaid care and domestic work, which can also lead to a lack of education and confidence in using digital devices. It therefore stresses the need to close the gender digital divide by investing in the digital literacy and skills of older women and by providing them with universal and affordable access to and use of technologies, including information and communications technologies, including new technologies, and the use of digitally enabled services. **(E/CN.6/2023/L.3 - CSW Agreed Conclusions 2023- Innovation and Technological Change, and Education in the Digital Age for Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls)**
- That the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) acknowledged that special attention should be given to the needs of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs: i) when elaborating national cyberstrategies, including educational, administrative and legislative measures; ii) for using ICTs in education and human-resources development; iii) in order that equipment and services offer easy and affordable access, under the

principles of universal design and assistive technology; iv) for promoting telework and increasing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities; v) for creating content that is pertinent to persons with disabilities; and vii) for creating the required abilities for the use of ICTs by persons with disabilities. **(WTDC-22 Final Report – Part IV – Resolution 58, World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022)**

Opportunities for action

Care and Support Services Including Caregivers

Care and support services for older persons are diverse and evolving, reflecting varied needs and preferences across formal and informal settings. Older persons require different levels of care and support influenced by lifelong social determinants like socioeconomic status, health access, and education. Comprehensive age-disaggregated data are essential to design effective policies that recognize caregivers' contributions and support their ability to participate fully in the workforce.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Further encourages Member States to promote terms and conditions of care work guided by International Labour Organization standards for all care workers, including but not limited to migrants, and to adopt measures to tackle the gender and age stereotypes for care work. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Stressing the need to recognize and value paid care work and care workers as essential workers and the need to adopt measures that combat gender stereotypes related to care and support, as well as those related to, inter alia, race, disability, ethnicity, age and migratory status, to reduce occupational segregation for care work, while recognizing the need to improve working conditions and reduce precarious employment in paid care work. **(E/RES/2024/4 – ECOSOC-Promoting Care and Support Systems for Social Development)**
- Further encourages Member States to promote and strengthen the estimation of the caregiving contribution and other activities of older persons to the economy in national accounts, including recognition of unpaid care for family members, in particular by older women, and to ensure that research on national accounts inform policymaking. **(E/RES/2023/15 - Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002)**
- Urges member States (...) to pay special attention to the key role that older persons, especially older women, play as caregivers in their families and the community, and particularly the burdens placed on them by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. **(WHA58/2005/REC/1 - World Health Assembly)**

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The chapter begins by emphasizing that the goal of social integration is to create a “society for all,” where every person, with both rights and responsibilities, plays an active role. However, the chapter only addressed older persons in relation to responses to special social needs and identified them as a group particularly vulnerable to violence, including domestic violence. This highlights the significance of Article 1 of the Political Declaration of the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002, which underscores the importance of fostering a “society for all ages.” In recalling the United Nations

Principles for Older Persons, the Copenhagen PoA highlights the importance of reviewing or developing strategies for implementing the International Plan of Action on Ageing so that older persons can maximize their contributions to society and play their full part in the community.

Social integration policies play a critical role in ensuring that efforts to reduce inequality, economic disparity and promote social justice adequately address the situation, needs and concerns of older persons, who are entitled to live without discrimination based on age or other forms of discrimination, which can lead to their marginalization and exclusion, placing them at increased risk of living in multidimensional poverty. This requires ensuring that decisions are based on accurate data and are made with the participation of those who will be affected.

Opportunities for action

Social Integration of Older Persons

The degree to which older persons are socially integrated directly affects their quality of life. While Member States generally recognize this, there remains a lack of coordinated policies to support their full participation in society and there is a need for purposeful action to enhance the social integration of older persons. Ageism continues to marginalize many older persons, undermining their independence and excluding them from decision-making processes that impact their lives.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- (...) When ageing is embraced as an achievement, the reliance on human skills, experiences and resources of the higher age groups is naturally recognized as an asset in the growth of mature, fully integrated, humane societies. **(Excerpt Article 6 - Political Declaration of the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Encourages Governments to actively address, through national, regional and international efforts, issues that affect older persons and to ensure that the social integration of older persons and the promotion and protection of their rights form an integral part of development policies at all levels. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Reaffirming the importance of ensuring the social integration of older persons and the promotion and protection of their rights, as an integral part of development policies at all levels, and recognizing that older persons can make a significant contribution to sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. **(A/RES/78/178 - Promoting Social Integration Through Social Inclusion)**

Opportunities for action

Full Participation in Society

Progress in enabling the full and equal participation of older persons in decision-making across regions remains uneven. It is essential to identify and remove legal, social, financial, and other barriers preventing older persons from actively seeking and creating opportunities for participation. When assessing the financial contributions of older persons, it is vital to avoid a productivity bias. Negative perceptions about older persons' participation, especially when they choose not to engage in economically valuable activities or are unable to, undermine their autonomy and violate their right to participate fully.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- (...) We also recognize that persons, as they age, should enjoy a life of fulfilment, health, security and active participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of their societies (...) **(Excerpt Article 5 - Political Declaration of the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Encourages Member States to create an enabling environment for the equal, full, effective and meaningful participation of older persons in political, social, economic and cultural life, while taking into account the diversity of situation of older persons and responding to population ageing as well as to multiple forms of discrimination resulting from ageism and other inequality throughout the life course. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Recognizes the significant contribution of older persons to volunteerism, emphasizes that active participation in social activities through volunteering fosters both their physical and mental well-being, helping them to maintain their independence and enhance their quality of life, and encourages Member States to foster opportunities for older volunteers, including in later life phases or during retirement, thereby facilitating active ageing and lifelong learning. **(A/RES/79/148 - Strengthening Volunteerism for the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, Leaving No One Behind)**
- Acknowledging the importance of accessibility for all, including persons with disabilities, older persons and other persons in vulnerable situations, to participate in all aspects of life and enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms fully, equally and effectively. **(A/HRC/RES/57/16 - Promoting Accessibility for the Full Enjoyment of All Human Rights by All)**
- Encourages States to take every opportunity to support diversity of civil society participation, with particular emphasis on underrepresented parts of civil society, including women, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to ethnic, religious, national, linguistic and racial minorities, migrants, refugees, and others, and also including Indigenous Peoples and others not associated with or organized in nongovernmental organizations. **(A/HRC/RES/53/13 - Civil Society Space)**

Opportunities for action

Political Participation and Greater Involvement of Civil Society

The promotion of an enabling environment for social development includes political participation, a fundamental human right enshrined in international human rights law. Yet, older persons often face significant barriers to full political participation, including digital exclusion, illiteracy, and limited access to accessible platforms. Physical and social isolation, compounded by factors like retirement, mobility restrictions, and low income, further hinder their engagement in public affairs. Member States should address these barriers by strengthening policies to combat age-based discrimination, ensuring equal access to public spaces and digital platforms, and promoting inclusive policies that empower older persons and their representative organizations to engage fully in decision-making. While economic, social, and demographic changes may be contributing to the increase in civic and political participation among older persons, a primary factor is that older persons often feel excluded from mainstream politics and societal debates.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- We stress the primary responsibility of Governments in promoting, providing and ensuring access to basic social services, bearing in mind specific needs of older persons. To this end we need to work together with local authorities, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, volunteers and voluntary organizations, older persons themselves and associations for and of older persons, as well as families and communities. **(Article 13 - Political Declaration of the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Recommends that Governments be inclusive in involving older persons and their organizations in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes that affect them, including through simple consultative mechanisms to co-research or co-design such policies and programmes with or by older persons and to take due account of involving those who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and are particularly vulnerable to high incidences of poverty and social exclusion. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**

Opportunities for action

Promotion of Non-Discrimination

Age-based discrimination is a barrier to social development, undermining the full participation and well-being of older persons. It impacts their ability to fully exercise their human rights, including access to health, adequate living standards, work, autonomy, and participation in community life. To advance social development, Member States should prioritize the adoption of stronger legal protections and comprehensive policies to combat age-based discrimination, improve awareness of rights, and ensure inclusive, accessible frameworks that allow older persons to participate fully and equally in society.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Also encourages Member States to adopt and implement non-discriminatory policies, legislation and regulations, to systematically review and amend these, where appropriate, if they discriminate against older persons, especially on the basis of age, and to take appropriate measures to prevent discrimination against older persons in, inter alia, employment, social protection and the provision of social, health-care and long-term care services. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Calls upon all States to prohibit all forms of discrimination against older persons and to adopt and implement non-discriminatory policies, national strategies, action plans, legislation and regulations, including in response to violence, abuse and neglect, and to promote and ensure the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for older persons in, inter alia, employment, social protection, housing, education and training, access to technologies and the provision of financial, social, health-care, long-term support and palliative care services, while systematically providing for consultation with and the participation of older persons themselves, and their representative organizations. **(A/HRC/RES/54/13 - Human Rights of Older Persons)**

- Recognizing that older populations make diverse and valuable contributions to society and should experience equal rights and opportunities, and live free from age-based discrimination. **(WHA69.3 – The Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health 2016–2020: Towards a World in which Everyone Can Live a Long and Healthy Life)**

Opportunities for action

Combatting Neglect, Abuse and Violence

Older persons have the right to freedom from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect, in both private and public settings. Older women, older persons with disabilities, older Indigenous Peoples, older persons in rural and remote areas, and other vulnerable groups are at greater risk owing to overlapping inequalities that create and compound deprivation and disadvantage. Also experiencing higher risk of neglect, abuse and violence are older persons in forced displacement and conflict settings, hospitals, prisons, caregiving establishments and mental health institutions. While Governments have adopted diverse approaches in response, such as the introduction of laws and policies, they have been neither systemic nor transformative against a backdrop of persisting significant challenges in implementation and the provision of adequate resources.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- (...) We are determined to enhance the recognition of the dignity of older persons and to eliminate all forms of neglect, abuse and violence. **(Excerpt Article 5 - Political Declaration of the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- To adopt and implement non-discriminatory policies, national strategies, action plans, legislation and regulations, including in response to domestic violence, abuse and neglect, and to ensure the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons related to, inter alia, employment, social protection, housing, education and training, access to technologies and the provision of financial, social, healthcare, long-term support and palliative care services. **(A/HRC/RES/57/18 - Elimination of Domestic Violence)**
- Condemns in the strongest possible terms the persistence and pervasiveness of all forms of violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons worldwide, and reaffirms that all older persons should be able to live free from violence, abuse and neglect. **(A/HRC/RES/54/13 - Human Rights of Older Persons)**
- (...) Calls upon all States to promote and ensure the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for older persons, including by progressively taking measures to combat age discrimination, neglect, abuse and violence, as well as social isolation and loneliness (...) **(Excerpt A/RES/75/131 – United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030))**

As populations age and humanitarian emergencies increase, older persons face heightened risks, yet they are often excluded from emergency response systems, which exacerbates their vulnerability. Human mobility, including displacement due to climate change or conflict, further complicates the challenges older persons face, underscoring the need for inclusive policies that address their specific needs. An effective humanitarian response must integrate older persons into disaster management plans and recognize the contributions of older persons in emergencies. This requires the development of inclusive policies, adequate financing, a strong evidence base including age-disaggregated data, and the recognition of older persons' rights under international human rights and humanitarian law.

Building on the core message, the following agreed language underscores key commitments, offering a foundation for Member States to build upon and strengthen global action at the Second World Summit for Social Development:

- Calls upon Member States to take concrete measures, in accordance with national circumstances and, as appropriate, international humanitarian law, to further protect and assist older persons in emergency situations, and invites all States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of older persons, in accordance with the Madrid Plan of Action and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 19 by, inter alia, including older persons in disaster risk reduction and national and local emergency planning and response frameworks, collecting and using data disaggregated by age, sex and disability for policy design and implementation, as well as carrying out risk and vulnerabilities analyses of older women in humanitarian emergencies with a view to minimizing the risk to older women of all forms of violence in such emergencies. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Deeply concerned by the increasing number and scale of humanitarian emergencies and their impact on older persons, particularly older women, reiterating the importance of giving due consideration to their specific needs, as well as their capacity to respond, and to the contributions of older persons to the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance and efforts in disaster risk reduction, and noting with concern that the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by older women can be exacerbated during humanitarian emergencies and aggravate their potential vulnerabilities. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Encourages Member States to provide services and support to older persons, including grandparents, who have assumed responsibility for children who were abandoned or whose parents are deceased, have migrated, have been displaced, including in the context of humanitarian emergencies, or are otherwise unable to care for their dependents. **(A/RES/79/147 - Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing)**
- Acknowledges the important contribution of age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in identifying, through the full participation of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, the protection risks faced by the different members of the refugee communities, in particular the non-discriminatory treatment and protection of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. **(A/RES/78/185 - Assistance to Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa)**

- Recognizing further the risks that older persons face in humanitarian emergencies, that they have years of knowledge, skills and wisdom, which are invaluable assets to reduce disaster risk, and that they should be included in the design of policies, plans and mechanisms, including for early warning and for disaster risk reduction, and recognizing also that their particular needs should be taken into account. **(E/RES/2024/8 - ECOSOC - Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations)**
- To take into account gender, age and disability perspectives when requesting and analysing information and give special attention to the occurrence of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence against migrant women and girls, children, older migrant persons, migrants with disabilities and Indigenous migrants. **(A/HRC/RES/52/20 - Human Rights of Migrants: Mandate of Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants)**

LOOKING BEYOND COPENHAGEN

Over nearly three decades, Member States and the international community have gained valuable insights and experiences in implementing social development policies. However, significant implementation gaps remain, underscoring the urgency of mobilizing new and additional financial resources to ensure commitments translate into tangible actions. Addressing these gaps will also require robust research and data collection, disaggregated by age, sex, disability and other relevant factors, to provide clear evidence base for action.

The commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on Social Development remain foundational, but the world has undergone significant transformations since 1995. Addressing global challenges such as climate change, technological advancements and demographic shifts highlight the necessity of expanding its scope to address issues beyond those initially envisioned. The Second World Summit for Social Development offers a critical opportunity to reflect these realities and ensure the political declaration is equipped to meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

Demographic shifts, particularly population ageing, is reshaping global and national development landscapes. The declaration should reflect a life-course approach to social development, ensuring that policies consider the diverse needs and contributions of all age groups, particularly older persons. Recognizing these demographic realities is essential to crafting inclusive, responsive, and sustainable social development policies.

This collective exercise reflects the views of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, advocating for a political declaration that recognizes the role of older persons and the impact of population ageing in achieving social development. In this context, members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing have identified several additional critical topics for consideration by Member States in this process, including:

Topic	Additional Information
Tackling the abuse of older persons	Tackling abuse of older people: five priorities for the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) Database of promising interventions to prevent and respond to abuse of older people
Age-friendly cities and communities	WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities Age-friendly World – the digital home of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

	National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities: guide and toolkit (WHO)
Age-friendly environments	WHO's work on Age-friendly Environments Global Database of Age-friendly Practices
Assistive devices	WHO Global report on assistive technology
Continuum of integrated health and social care and support	Integrated care for older people (ICOPE): guidance for person-centred assessment and pathways in primary care, 2nd edition (WHO) Population and Development Report Issue No. 9: Building Forward Better for Older Persons in the Arab Region Integrated care for older people approach (ICOPE)
Data disaggregation by age to fill evidence gaps	Findings from Titchfield Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated Data Making older persons visible in the Sustainable Development Goals' monitoring framework and indicators (WHO) National Toolkit for Monitoring, Measuring, and Evaluating the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (WHO) – scheduled for release ahead of WSSD2.
United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030)	WHO's work on the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030): Join the movement of the Decade's platform
Digital Cooperation	United Nations Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation (A/74/821) United Nations Global Digital Compact (A/79/L.2)
Intergenerational solidarity	An overview of the application of the concept of intergenerational solidarity across public policy domains WHO: Connecting generations: planning and implementing interventions for intergenerational contact United Nations Global Report on Ageism Population and Development Report Issue No. 8: Prospects of Ageing with Dignity in the Arab Region
Legal empowerment and equal access to criminal justice system	Equal Access to Justice for All (E/RES/78/227)
Long-term care and support	Long-term care for older people: package for universal health coverage (WHO)

	Framework for countries to achieve an integrated continuum of long-term care (WHO)
Meaningful engagement of older people	Voice and meaningful engagement in the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing: A discussion paper
Needs and circumstances of older persons with drug use disorders	Ministerial Declaration – 62nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Older persons in conflicts	UNHCR – Older Persons
Older Prisoners	Discussion guide for the Fifteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Older Persons and climate change, pollution, impact of climate related events on older persons	United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing Connection Series Advocacy Brief No. 3: The Decade in a Climate-changing World
Older Workers: flexibility, caregiving, age discrimination, and multigenerational workforce	World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025
Organized digital financial fraud targeting older persons	Organized Fraud - Issue Paper
Social connection and combating loneliness and social isolation	United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing advocacy brief: Social isolation and loneliness among older people WHO Commission on Social Connection flagship report Scheduled for release ahead of WSSD2 WHO Evidence and gap map on in-person interventions for reducing social isolation and loneliness (all ages) WHO Evidence and gap map on digital interventions for reducing social isolation in older adults

Note:

This advocacy brief draws upon the following reports: A/79/157, E/CN.5/2023/6, A/75/218, and A/78/188.

For any clarifications or inquiries regarding additional resources, please contact ageing@un.org to be directed to the relevant member of the United Nations IAGA.